

Association Chapter is doing in his name. The ALS Association is the world leader in ALS research and patient care services. The Carolinas' Jim "Catfish" Hunter Chapter of the ALS Association raises awareness and gives support to people with ALS and their families throughout North and South Carolina. For each of the past two years, it has been named as "Chapter of the Year," and their work alerted me to this important veteran's issue.

Madam Speaker, with your leadership, the support of our colleagues in Congress, and the help of activists at the grass roots level, we have a real shot at conquering ALS for our military veterans and citizens alike.

VETERANS BENEFITS AWARENESS ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. RON KLEIN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3681, the Veterans Benefits Awareness Act of 2008, which passed the House of Representatives this week.

Fifty veterans move to Florida every day, and I am honored to represent thousands who served our country honorably in our Nation's military. The efforts of military veterans have provided Americans with security and peace of mind, and I remain eternally grateful for their sacrifices.

I believe that America owes its military heroes a debt of gratitude, and that their priorities must be the Nation's top priorities. I am committed to making sure that members of the military and veterans receive the benefits that they deserve when they return home.

Several times per year, I am proud to convene my Congressional Veterans Advisory Groups in Broward and Palm Beach Counties to listen and learn about the needs of South Florida veterans. One of the most pressing issues that has repeatedly come up is the veterans' need to know more about their benefits. One solution to this problem is an awareness campaign to educate returning servicemembers about available benefits. The Veterans Benefits Awareness Act of 2008 does just that by allowing the Secretary of the VA to advertise and promote awareness of veterans' benefits.

I am proud to support H.R. 3681, the Veterans Benefits Awareness Act of 2008, because I believe that nothing should stand in the way between a veteran and the benefits that he or she deserves. This legislation will go a long way to help returning servicemembers and veterans in my district and throughout the country.

IN HONOR OF THE SESQUICENTENNIAL OF BAXTER SPRINGS, KANSAS

HON. NANCY E. BOYDA

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2008

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the city of Baxter Springs, Kansas for their sesquicentennial.

One hundred fifty years ago, Baxter Springs was founded, and it was named in honor of its first settler, John Baxter. During this time there was a booming cattle trade in Kansas, with Baxter Springs being an important point of commerce for cattlemen from the south bringing their livestock to sell in Kansas City. In fact, Baxter Springs was one of the first "Cowtowns" founded in Kansas.

Should one have the chance to visit Baxter Springs, you would see the same scenic back-grounds of Kansas prairie and the Spring River that the first settlers of the city would have viewed. The river has played host to many of the town's events over the years, and also supported the town's first flour mill.

Many visitors have come through Baxter Springs while traveling on Route 66. The road is an important part of local, and national history with Americans traveling on Route 66 to destinations near and far, viewing some of the most beautiful sites that America has to offer.

There is a lot of history in the city of Baxter Springs, and it represents an important aspect of the State of Kansas. As the sesquicentennial slogan states, "150 years and only the beginning."

I offer my sincerest congratulations to Baxter Springs and I give my warmest wishes for the next 150 years.

RENEWABLE ENERGY AND JOB CREATION ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I stand in strong support of H.R. 6049, the Renewable Energy and Job Creation Act of 2008.

I have always believed that as a Nation we should wean ourselves from our dependence on fossil fuels and invest in the energy of the future.

After several attempts, the House of Representatives has finally found an appropriate balance to promote the technologies of tomorrow in a way that will benefit our long term energy security.

This legislation has much to be proud of.

It will extend the tax credit for producing electricity from renewable sources of energy which will enable Texas—the Nation's number one producer of wind energy—to continue adding clean energy and jobs to our economy.

It also extends the investment tax credits for solar energy, fuel cells, and energy-efficient appliances for the home, and it creates new tax credits for plug-in hybrid vehicles and renewable energy tax-credit bonds.

And after learning of the unintended consequences that corn-based ethanol has had on our environment and global food prices, this legislation rightly includes a six-cent reduction in the ethanol tax credit and creates a new credit for the production of cellulosic biofuels.

Aside from energy provisions, I am pleased this legislation includes several sections extending benefits for members of the military and veterans.

Extension of the rules allowing military personnel to treat their combat pay as earned in-

come, extending specialized mortgage bond rules for veterans, as well as a provision allowing reservists to make penalty free withdrawals from the retirement accounts if called to active duty for 180 days or more will benefit those who have served our country, and provide added financial options for their families if necessary.

Finally, H.R. 6069 will extend the state and local sales tax deduction which assists taxpayers in Texas who do not pay a state income tax, and it provides almost \$10 billion of additional tax relief for individuals through an expansion of the refundable child tax credit and a new standard deduction for property taxes.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend and colleague, Chairman RANGEL, for producing a bill that enhances our energy and job security and that has support from both sides of the aisle.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

HONORING DR. CHARLES RUCH

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 22, 2008

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Charles Ruch for his nearly 5 years of service to the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology in Rapid City, South Dakota. Dr. Ruch was installed as the school's seventeenth president on July 1, 2003. During his tenure at the School of Mines, Dr. Ruch led the institution in strengthening the undergraduate curriculum to ensure that students graduate with exceptional scientific training and real world skills. Dr. Ruch worked to improve and expand graduate programs and thereby increased the research activities taking place at the School of Mines. I appreciate Dr. Ruch's commitment to working closely with the Rapid City community, the state government and Board of Regents, the Congressional delegation, and other partners to enhance the reputation of the School of Mines as a teaching and research center of excellence.

I send best wishes and congratulations to Dr. Ruch on the occasion of his retirement.

EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES AND SYMPATHY TO THE PEOPLE OF SICHUAN PROVINCE, CHINA

SPEECH OF

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I am proud to support H. Res. 1195 and express my heartfelt sympathy for the many victims of the recent earthquake in China's Sichuan province. My prayers go out to all those who lost loved ones and property in this unfortunate tragedy, and it is my sincere hope that the people of the region will be able to recover quickly from the humanitarian crisis that has developed.